

PRAYERS *of* OCCASIONS

A Handbook of Muslim Salah

Compiled & Translated by

TALAL AL-AZEM

Foreword by

NUH HA MIM KELLER

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OXFORD TRADITIONAL
KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION

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FOREWORD

OCASIONS HAVE BEEN SENT to man to remind him of the greatest realities of his existence: himself, his Lord, and his inevitable journey out of this world. Allah Most High says, 'How supreme in beneficence is He in whose hand is all dominion, and He has power over everything: Who has created death and life to try you as to which of you is best in works, and He is the Invincibly Powerful, the All-forgiving' (Koran 67:1-2).

Whoever takes these occasions to turn to the Divine finds unlooked-for help, the path opening before him from one success to another. For the prayer (*salah*) is an intimate connection (*silah*) between creature and Creator, to manifest His favor, lift man to a higher plane, and remind him of his destiny. Greatest of all are the prescribed prayers, then the sunnas associated with them, then the voluntary prayers to be performed regularly, including those in the present volume, which bring a special closeness to Allah, as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said: 'Allah Most High says: "Whomever is hostile to a friend (*wali*) of Mine I declare war against. My slave approaches Me with nothing more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon him, and My slave keeps drawing nearer to Me with voluntary works until I love him. And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his foot with which he walks. If he asks

Me, I will surely give to him, and if he seeks refuge in Me, I will certainly protect him. I do not hesitate from anything I shall do more than My hesitation at taking the soul of the believer who dislikes death; for I dislike displeasing him” (*Bukhari*, 8.131: 6502. S).

The secret of the Sacred Knowledge in this manual lies in gaining it, perfecting it, making it one’s inevitable practice, and continuing upon it with as much strength as one has in one’s body for as long as one is alive. People who acquire knowledge in this way find their prayer spends upon their purity of heart, graciousness of character, triumph in life, and love of Allah. Whomever Allah gives success in this has attained tremendous good in this world and the next. Ibn ‘Ata Illah has said, speaking from what he had personally tried and experienced: ‘The prayer is a place of intimate converse, and a mine-lode of sincere reciprocal love. In it the vistas of secrets extend before one, and there appear on its horizons the dawns of illuminations. He knew of weakness in you, so made them few in number, and knew your need for His bounty, so made them abundant in favor’ (*al-Hikam al-‘Ata’iyya*, no. 120).

May Allah bless everyone who reads this work with closeness to Him, through prayers with nothing in the heart but adoring Allah for Himself; and may He make the hearts of all those who benefit from it a joy to His beloved Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) on the day we rejoin him, ‘a day when not even prodigious wealth or sons will avail; but rather, only he who brings Allah a heart sound and pure’ (Koran 26:89).

NUH HA MIM KELLER

PREFACE

PRAYERS OF OCCASIONS is a handbook of Muslim ritual prayers (*salah*). The purpose of these prayers is the sanctification of daily life—the perception of the Divine in all that we experience, and in all that we do.

The scope of the book has been limited, as the title indicates, to prayers of occasions—events at particular moments which engender a turning to the Divine for clarity, remembrance, and aid. As such, the set regular daily prayers (*rawatib*) have not been included. These include the five obligatory (*fard*) prayers—namely, the prayers of dawn (*fajr*), noon (*zuhr*), midafternoon (*‘asr*), sunset (*maghrib*), and nightfall (*‘isha*); the Witr prayer, which is required (*wajib*) according to the Hanafi rite; the confirmed sunnah (*sunnah mu’akkadah*) prayers—namely, two rak’ahs before the dawn prayer, four before the noon prayer, two after the noon prayer, two after the sunset prayer, and two after the nightfall prayer; and the merely recommended supererogatory (*mandub*) rak’ahs regularly performed in addition to the confirmed sunnah prayers—namely, two additional rak’ahs after the noon prayer beyond the aforementioned two rak’ahs which are a confirmed sunnah (for a total of four), four rak’ahs before the afternoon prayer, four rak’ahs before the nightfall prayer, and two additional rak’ahs after the nightfall prayer beyond the aforementioned two rak’ahs which are a confirmed sunnah (for a total of four).

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This book has been compiled and translated from a number of classical works on Muslim worship and Prophetic traditions (hadith). The source of each passage translated is provided in the marginalia, in shorthand. The key to this shorthand, along with the full bibliographical information for each work, is to be found at the end of the book. Endnotes provide the source of the hadith when the original author has not done so.

At times, the primary text required further explanation. When such commentary is provided interlinearly by a classical author, it is framed by square brackets ([]). The source of this commentary is then provided, in the marginalia, after the title of the primary text and an ampersand (e.g. '*Had. Imad & Nih. Mur., 636*'). In situations where square brackets occur, but no additional source is named in the marginalia, the information has been added by the translator. Extended editorial commentary by the translator is offset by a pilcrow (¶) and typeset in a smaller size, without brackets.

Ellipses (...) indicate that the translator has left a portion of the original text untranslated at that juncture. This has been done when the passage removed was a point of Arabic grammar, the information presented has already been discussed elsewhere, or the passage delved into details beyond the scope of this work. In a few instances, such passages necessitated summarization, while keeping to the original word-choice of the author; a star (*) is placed after the reference in the margins to denote this.

Section titles have been added by the translator. Dates are given according to both Hijri and Gregorian calendars, separated by a slash. The following abbreviations have been used throughout the text and bibli-

ography: *Ar.*: Arabic; *b.*: ibn ('the son of'); *d.*: died; *lit.*: literally; *n.d.*: no publication date given; *n.p.*: no publication place given; *pl.*: plural; and *vols.*: volumes.

For those ritual prayers in which a particular supplication (*du'a*) is recommended, the supplication is given first in the original Arabic, then in transliteration, and finally in translation. The system of transliteration used largely follows that of the Library of Congress. The use of parentheses in the transliteration indicates that the letters therein are not pronounced if one pauses, but are pronounced if one continues reading without pause.

Technical terminology peculiar to Islamic law and theology is rendered into English, with the original Arabic term following in parentheses. A glossary of terms is provided at the back of the book, where these technical and Arabic terms are defined. Glossary terms are rendered with full diacritics in order to assist in proper Arabic pronunciation. Readers should consult the glossary when coming upon terms with which they are not familiar.

One point in particular might be a source of confusion, and must be clarified from the outset. Throughout this text, whenever the name 'Muhammad' is mentioned in the context of legal opinions and disputes, the name refers to Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 189/805), the second of the 'Two Companions' of Abu Hanifah, the eponym of the Hanafi school of law upon which this compilation is largely based. (The first 'companion' was the Chief Judge Abu Yusuf (d. 182/798).) It does not refer to the prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), whose name when mentioned is always followed by the traditional benedictions.

THIS BOOK has been presented in a style meant to make the work accessible to a general readership and specialists alike. As such, the endnotes, references in the marginalia, the mention of other titles in the main text, and occasional scholarly discussion can safely be passed over by readers interested primarily in knowing how to perform a particular prayer, while students of Sacred Knowledge will find benefit in the details provided.

As this is a handbook compiled largely from well-known Hanafi works, it provides critical assessment of neither the juridical positions (*fiqh*) nor the ranking of the individual hadiths mentioned, beyond what the authors themselves sometimes proffered. Readers who pursue the ranking of the hadiths may notice that some of the reports and traditions are not rigorously authenticated (*sahih*); a few are even deemed weak (*da'if*) by some hadith critics. However, acting upon even a weak hadith in supererogatory acts of piety is permissible—encouraged, in fact, in the Hanafi school of law (*madhhab*) and others—so long as certain conditions are met (details of which are provided on page 37).

Whilst largely based upon the scholarship of the Hanafi rite, these are not 'Hanafi' prayers *per se*. This compilation contains prayers indispensable to any Muslim, and all of these prayers can be found in the works of other schools of law or in the books of hadith. Furthermore, it is a maxim that the supererogatory devotions of one school may be practised by the follower of another, for the purpose of performing such prayers is not to be a 'school-member', but to draw closer by means of them to Allah.

PRAYERS PROPER TO THE TIME OF DAY

THE MIDMORNING PRAYER

(AL-DUHA)

THE MIDMORNING PRAYER (*duha*) is a recommended (*mandub*) prayer, according to the dominant position of the Hanafi madhhab. *Mar. Fal. & Tahtawi, 321*

[Minimally two rak'ahs,] this prayer is optimally performed as four rak'ahs or more. It is offered during the midmorning, beginning when the sun has risen off the horizon and into the sky, and ending immediately before the sun peaks, [the most preferable time being once a quarter of the day has passed].

One may perform...up to twelve rak'ahs for the midmorning prayer. This is based upon al-Tabarani's narration, in his *al-Mu'jam al-kabir*, on the authority of Abu al-Darda', who said, 'The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: "Whoever prays two rak'ahs will not be written amongst the heedless; whoever prays four will be written amongst those in perpetual worship (*al-'abidin*); whoever prays six will be sufficed that day; whoever prays eight, Allah will register him amongst those standing perpetually in prayer (*al-qanitin*); and whoever prays twelve rak'ahs, for him shall Allah build a home in Paradise."¹

Had. 'Imad, 650 The offering of four or more rak'ahs is also encouraged by the tradition related by 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), who said, 'The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) used to perform four rak'ahs for the midmorning prayer, and used to supplement them with as many additional rak'ahs as Allah willed' (as narrated by Muslim and Imam Ahmad).

THE PRAYER OF THE OFT-REPENTING

(AL-AWWABIN)

Had. 'Imad, 629 IT IS RECOMMENDED that one pray six rak'ahs ... after the sunset prayer (*maghrib*). The basis of this prayer is the saying of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace): 'Whoever prays six rak'ahs after the sunset prayer (*maghrib*) is written amongst the oft-repenting (*al-awwabin*).' He then recited the words of Allah Most High: 'Verily, to the oft-repenting He is most forgiving' (Koran 17:25). He (Allah bless him and give him peace) also said: 'Whoever prays six rak'ahs after the sunset prayer (*maghrib*), in between which he speaks no ill, for him will they be deemed the equivalent of twelve years of worship' (as narrated by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah). In another narration: 'Whoever prays six rak'ahs after the sunset prayer (*maghrib*) before speaking, fifty years of sins will be forgiven him' (as mentioned in *al-Jami' al-saghir* on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both)).

Many reports have been narrated regarding the many virtues of standing in prayer between sunset (*maghrib*) and the nightfall (*'isha'*). It has been said that this prayer is what is meant by the words 'rising in the

night (*nashi'at al-layl*)' (Koran 73:6). 'A'ishah narrates that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'Whoever prays twenty rak'ahs after the sunset prayer (*maghrib*), for him Allah will build a home in Paradise' (as narrated by Ibn Majah, and mentioned in *al-Ikhtiyar*).

My father² (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: '*Al-awwab* is he who oft-returns to the obedience of Allah Most High. This prayer possesses great virtue. It has been said that this prayer is what is intended by His Most High's saying: "Those whose sides forsake their beds..." (Koran 32:16).' *Nih. Mur., 629*

It is stated in *al-Ghaznawiiyyah*: 'The prayer of the oft-repenting—the time of which is between the two night prayers—is six rak'ahs with three closing salutations (*taslimah*).' Abu al-Baqā' al-Qurashi states in his commentary: 'One prays six rak'ahs, intending thereby to perform the prayer of the oft-repenting. In each rak'ah, one reads—after the *Fatihah*—*Qul ya ayyuha al-kafirun* [Koran 109] once, and *Qul huwa Allahu ahad* [Koran 112] thrice.... It is permissible, in fact, to perform up to eight rak'ahs for this prayer. However, our concern here is with what is most preferable, and that, according to what has been transmitted, is six rak'ahs.'

THE NIGHT PRAYER

(SALAT AL-LAYL and TAHAJJUD)

NIGHT PRAYER (*salat al-layl*) is recommended, especially in the latter part of the night.... The virtues of night prayer are innumerable. Allah Most High says: *Mar. Fal., 321-2*

'No soul knows what He has stored away for them, that will bring joy to their eyes' (Koran 32:17). And as related in *Sahih Muslim*, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'You are encouraged to perform night prayers, for it was the custom of the pious before you, a means of drawing close to your Lord, a penance for your mistakes, and a restraint from sin.'

'TAHAJJUD' IS A SPECIFIC TYPE OF NIGHT PRAYER

Nih. Mur., 652-5 The night prayer is best performed in the heart of the night after sleeping [in which case it is termed '*tahajjud*']....

Al-Tabarani narrates, with a chain returning to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace): 'One should perform a prayer at night, even if as short in duration as the milking of a ewe. Any prayer offered after the nightfall prayer ('*isha*'), but before sleeping, is deemed a night prayer.' The author of *al-Bahr* writes: 'This indicates that the sunnah is fulfilled by performing supererogatory prayers after the nightfall prayer ('*isha*') before sleeping.'

Radd Muht., 1/460 * '*Tahajjud*' is to awaken from sleep with effort. The terms 'night prayer' (*salat al-layl*) and 'night vigil' (*qiyam al-layl*) are thus more general than the term '*tahajjud*'.

- ¶ Meaning, the terms 'night prayer' and the 'night vigil' apply to any supererogatory (*nafl*) prayer performed after the nightfall prayer ('*isha*') and before the dawn prayer (*fajr*), while the term '*tahajjud*' applies to supererogatory night prayers performed after arising from nocturnal sleep.

MAKE-UP PRAYERS PERFORMED AT NIGHT
ARE DEEMED NIGHT PRAYERS

At face value, the preceding would seem to indicate that only supererogatory prayers may technically be deemed 'night prayers', such that if one were to sleep after the nightfall prayer ('*isha*') and then arise and perform make-up prayers (*qada*'), this would not be counted as '*tahajjud*'. A number of scholars of the Shafi'i school have debated this point. It is my opinion that this understanding arises from the fact that most prayers performed nocturnally are supererogatory. Nonetheless, the truth is that any prayer performed at this time—supererogatory or makeup—is to be deemed a night prayer, due to the saying of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) in the previously mentioned hadith: 'Any prayer performed after the nightfall prayer ('*isha*') is deemed a night prayer.'

NIGHT PRAYERS ARE A CONFIRMED SUNNAH

Furthermore, know that the classification of the night prayer as a merely recommended prayer (*mandub*) is the opinion taken in *al-Hawi al-qudsi*. However, Ibn al-Humam, in his work *Fath al-qadir*, was unsure whether to deem it a sunnah or a merely recommended prayer: the Prophetic verbal statements indicate mere recommendation, while his constant practice indicates that it is a sunnah. It is a principle that any act of worship which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) constantly practised voluntarily becomes a sunnah in regard to all Muslims. However, this presupposes that the night prayer was a voluntary act of obedience in re-

gard to him, which is the position of one party of scholars. Another party holds that it was obligatory upon him exclusively; if true, his constant practice of this form of worship would not render it a sunnah in regard to us. However, as related by 'A'ishah in *Sahih Muslim* and other works, it is explicitly stated that night prayers were at one time obligatory upon him, but that this obligation was later abrogated. This is a summary of Ibn al-Humam's discussion.

The upshot is that the night prayer is in fact to be considered a sunnah in regard to us, because the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) constantly practised it after its obligatory status was abrogated.

THE NUMBER OF RAK'AHs IN A NIGHT PRAYER

Al-Haskafi writes: 'According to *al-Jawharah*, the minimum number of rak'ahs for night prayer is eight.' However, he conditioned his statement by writing 'according to *al-Jawharah*', because it is stated in *al-Hawi al-qudsi*: 'One prays however many rak'ahs are made easy for him, even if only two rak'ahs. The complete sunnah for night prayers, however, is eight rak'ahs with four closing salutations (*taslimah*).'... It has been narrated from the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace): 'Whoever arises in the night and awakens his spouse, and then performs two rak'ahs together with her, the two of them will be written amongst those men and women who make much remembrance of Allah' (as narrated by al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*, and al-Hakim, with al-Mundhiri stating, 'It is deemed rigorously authenticated (*sahih*) according to the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim').

Thus, it should be made absolutely clear that the minimum number of rak'ahs for night prayers (*tahajjud*) is two rak'ahs, the median is four, and the maximum eight. And Allah knows best....

PREFERRED TIMES OF NIGHT PRAYER

If a person wishes to rise in prayer for a third of the night, and to sleep for two-thirds of the night, then the middle third is superior to the first and last thirds of the night, because it is a time in which heedlessness of Allah is greatest [due to people's slumber], and in which worship is most difficult.

If a person wishes to rise in prayer for half of the night and to sleep for half, then rising for the latter half is superior, since it is a time in which sin is rare. This is attested to in the rigorously authenticated hadith 'Our Lord descends to the heavens of the Earth each night when one third of the night remains, and says, "Who shall call upon Me, such that I may answer him? Who shall ask of Me, such that I may grant him? Who shall seek forgiveness of Me, such that I may forgive him?"'.³ (Here, the words 'Our Lord descends' mean *His command*, as figuratively interpreted by the latter-day scholars and some of the greatest of the early scholars, full discussion of which may be found in Ibn Hajar al-Haythami's *Tuhfat al-muhtaj*.)

It has also been mentioned that even more superior to rising in the middle third of the night is to divide the night into six parts, and to rise for the fourth and fifth parts. This is based upon the tradition whose veracity is agreed upon by the scholars of hadith: 'The most beloved prayer to Allah Most High is the prayer

of David: he used to sleep for half the night, rise in prayer for a third, and then sleep for a sixth.⁷⁴

THE NUMBER OF RAK'AHs PRAYED
WITH A SINGLE CLOSING SALUTATION

Had. 'Imad, According to Abu Hanifah, it is preferable that one perform the supererogatory prayers, both those of the day and of the night, in sets of four rak'ahs with one closing salutation (*taslimah*). Abu Yusuf held that, for night prayers, it is preferred that they be in sets of two.

Nih. Mur., My father (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: 'It is preferred, according to Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, that in the day they be performed in groups of four, and at night in groups of two. In short, Abu Hanifah and his Two Companions are in agreement that the number for supererogatory prayers performed in the day are groups of four, and disagree as to the supererogatory prayer performed at night. Al-Barjandi states, "It is mentioned in a number of legal opinions that the official position (*fatwa*) of the Hanafi madhhab is that of the Two Companions."

THE SUPERIORITY OF PROLONGED RAK'AHs
OVER NUMEROUS RAK'AHs

Mar. Fal., Praying a small number of rak'ahs, but in which one spends more time standing in recitation of the Koran per rak'ah, is superior to praying a greater number of brief rak'ahs; this applies equally to prayers performed at night and during the day. The basis of this is the Prophet's saying (Allah bless him and give him peace): 'The best prayer is that in which one's standing

in prayer (*qunut*) is prolonged' (as narrated by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi—who rated it sound and rigorously authenticated— Ibn Majah, Ahmad, and others). 'One's standing', in this hadith, means 'one's standing in recitation of the Koran'. By prolonging one's standing, one increases the amount of Koran one recites; by increasing the number of rak'ahs, one performs more acts of bowing and prostrating, and as a result increases the number of formulas of praise (*tasbih*) recited. Since reciting Koran is superior to reciting formulas of praise, prolonged rak'ahs are superior.

It has been reported in *al-Mujtaba* that Muhammad held the opposite position: namely, that numerous acts of bowing and prostrating are superior. Abu Yusuf (may Allah have mercy upon him) made a distinction, holding that if one has a daily litany of reciting Koran at night, then increasing the number of rak'ahs is superior; if not, then prolonging one's standing in recitation is superior. In the first scenario, his daily amount of time spent in recitation of Koran will not diminish, so it is better for him that he supplement this type of worship with further acts of bowing and prostrating.

PRAYERS OF THE SACRED CALENDAR

NIGHT VIGIL ON THE EVE OF MID-SHA'BAN

IT IS RECOMMENDED that one perform the night vigil *Mar. Fal. & Tahtawi, 325-6* (*ihya'*) on the eve of mid-Sha'ban. Night vigil on the eve of mid-Sha'ban expiates the sins of that year, on the eve of Friday expiates the sins of that week, and on the Night of Power (*Laylat al-qadr*) expiates the sins of one's entire life. On that night is determined one's provision, length of life, wealth, poverty, honour, obscurity, life, death, and the numbers of time one performs the Hajj pilgrimage. On this night, Allah Most High pours forth much good into this world.

There are five nights in which supplication (*du'a'*) is not rejected: the eve of Friday, the first eve of Rajab, the eve of mid-Sha'ban, and the eves of the two Eids.⁵ ... The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'Whoever holds vigil on the five nights, will necessarily enter Paradise: the eve of the eighth of Dhu al-Hijjah (*yawm al-tarwiyah*), the eve of the ninth of Dhu al-Hijjah (*yawm 'Arafah*), the eve of the tenth of Dhu al-Hijjah (*yawm al-nahr*), the eve of the first of Shawwal upon the ending of the Ramadan fast (*al-fitr*), and the eve of mid-Sha'ban.'⁶ He (Allah bless him and give him peace) also said: 'Whoever rises in worship for the eve

of mid-Sha'ban and the eves of the two Eids, his heart will not die on the day that hearts die.⁷

THE MEANING OF 'RISING' FOR NIGHT VIGIL

'To rise' for night vigil (*qiyam*) is to be occupied with acts of worship for most of the night—or, it has been said, for even a moment—by reciting or listening to recitation of the Koran or hadith, or by reciting formulas of praise (*tasbih*) or benedictions upon the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace).

It is narrated that Ibn 'Abbas held it to mean performing the nightfall prayer ('*isha*') in congregation, and resolving to perform the dawn prayer in congregation, just as it is for holding vigil on the eves of the two Eids. For the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) also said: 'Whoever performs the nightfall prayer ('*isha*') in congregation is like one who has stood half the night in worship; and whoever performs that dawn prayer (*fajr*) in congregation is like one who has stood the entire night in worship' (as narrated by Muslim).

RAMADAN NIGHT PRAYERS

(TARAWIH)

Quduri, 1/124-6 **I**T IS RECOMMENDED that people congregate in the month of Ramadan after the nightfall prayers ('*isha*'). Their imam is to lead them in five sets of Ramadan night prayers (*tarawih*), each set of which is composed of four rak'ahs (*tarwihah*); after every two rak'ahs one recites the closing salutations (*taslimah*). In be-

tween every set of four rak'ahs, people are to rest for the duration of a single set (*tarwihah*).

Upon completion of the Ramadan night prayer (*tarawih*), the imam is to lead them in the Witr prayer. The Witr prayer is not prayed in congregation outside of the month of Ramadan.

The very performance of the Ramadan night prayer is a confirmed sunnah (*sunnah mu'akkadah*). Al-Quduri's statement that 'it is recommended' (*mustahabb*) does not contradict this, for he was emphasizing that *for people to congregate* is recommended, not that the Ramadan night prayer itself is merely recommended, as explained in *al-'Inayah*. In confirmation of this understanding, it has been mentioned in *Sharh Munyat al-musalli* that 'a number of scholars have related a consensus of the scholars (*ijma'*) that the Ramadan night prayer is a sunnah'. *Radd Muht.*, 1/471*

TIME OF PERFORMANCE

Its time of performance is from after the nightfall prayer ('*isha*') until dawn, according to the most correct juristic opinion. As such, if one misses a part of the Ramadan night prayers with the congregation, he is to perform the Witr prayer with the imam, and then pray those rak'ahs which he missed on his own. *Durr Mukh.*, 1/473

CONGREGATING FOR TARAWIH IS A COMMUNAL SUNNAH

Al-Haskafi writes: 'To pray the Ramadan night prayers (*tarawih*) in congregation is a communal sunnah (*sunnah kifayah*).⁷ This means that the performance of the *Radd Muht.*, 1/473-4

Ramadan night prayer is in itself a personal sunnah (*sunnat 'ayn*). As such, it is disliked (*makruh*) for a person to leave it. In regard to its performance in congregation, it is a communal sunnah (*sunnah kifayah*), such that if nobody performs the congregation, all residents of that locale are deemed sinful. If, on the other hand, an individual does not participate in the congregation, he is deemed merely to have left a more perfect and virtuous action (*taraka al-fadilah*). Likewise, if some people perform the prayer in congregation in a private home, they are merely deemed to have not received the full benefit and virtue of performing it in congregation at the mosque.

The performance of the prayer in congregation at the mosque is a communal sunnah upon the people of a given locale, such that it is fulfilled even if one or more mosques in a town hold the congregation.

NIGHT VIGIL IN THE LAST TEN NIGHTS OF RAMADAN

Mar. Fal., 324-5 **I**T IS RECOMMENDED that one perform the night vigil (*ihya'*) during the last ten nights of Ramadan. This is based on 'A'ishah's relating (may Allah be pleased with her) that 'upon the commencement of the last ten nights of Ramadan, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) used to perform the night vigil; he would awaken his family, and would tighten his belt' [meaning, he would exert himself to the utmost in worship].

The intention behind this is that one keep vigil for the Night of Power (*laylat al-qadr*), for worship on that

night is better than worshipping for a thousand other nights. Ahmad narrates that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'Whoever rises for worship on the Night of Power out of faith and in order to store good works with Allah, Allah will forgive him all his previous sins and all those which follow.' He (Allah bless him and give him peace) also said: 'Be on guard for the Night of Power in the last ten days of Ramadan' (rigorously authenticated, by agreement of the main scholars of hadith).

THE NIGHT OF POWER (LAYLAT AL-QADR)

The generality of Muslims give the title 'the Night of Power (*laylat al-qadr*)' to the twenty-seventh night of Ramadan.... There are a number of hadiths which support this position. Abu Hanifah, however, responded that these hadiths were specific to their respective years. *Radd Muht., 2/136*

...The well-known position of the Imam is that the Night of Power moves throughout the entire year: it might occur in Ramadan, and it might occur in another month.

I say: his position is supported by the words of the Sultan of the Gnostics, my master Muhyi al-Din ibn al-'Arabi, in his work *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah*, who wrote: 'People have disputed when the Night of Power occurs. Some have held that it occurs throughout the entire year. And this is my opinion. For I have witnessed it in Sha'ban, and in one of the months of Rabi', and in the month of Ramadan. By and large, I have witnessed its occurrence most in the month of Ramadan, and particularly in the last ten nights. I witnessed it once occurring on an even night in the middle ten days of Ramadan, as

well as on an odd night. I am thus certain that it moves throughout the year, on both odd and even nights of the month.' The scholars hold other opinions as well, reaching forty-six different opinions.

NIGHT VIGIL ON THE EVES OF THE TWO EIDS

Mar. Fal., 325 **I**T IS RECOMMENDED that one perform the night vigil (*ihya'*) on the eves of the two Eids, namely, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

¶ This is based on the hadith narrated by Ibn Majah: 'Whoever rises for worship on the eves of the two Eids in order to store good works with Allah, his heart will not die on the day that hearts die.'

It is recommended that one seek repentance (*istighfar*) much in the hours preceding dawn. The supreme formula of repentance (*sayyid al-istighfar*) is:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ
وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، أَبُوءُ لَكَ
بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَأَبُوءُ بِذَنْبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا
أَنْتَ.

Allāhumma anta Rabbī lā ilāha illā ant(a), khalaqtanī wa anā 'abduka wa anā 'alā 'ahdika wa wa'dika mā 'staṭa't(u), a'ūdhu bika min sharri mā ṣana't(u), abū'u laka bi-ni'matika 'alayy(a), wa abū'u bi-dhanbī, fa'ghfir lī fa-innahu lā yaghfiru 'dh-dhunūba illā ant(a).

('O Allah, You are my Lord, and there is no god other than You; You have created me, and I am Your servant; I am bound to Your covenant, and bound to fulfill my oath of obedience, to the utmost of my ability. I seek refuge in You from the evil of my own doings. I freely acknowledge Your favour upon me, and I freely confess my sins; so forgive me, for none can forgive sins other than You'.)

¶ Regarding the virtues of the supreme formula of repentance, al-Bukhari narrates that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'Whoever recites it during the day, with full certitude, and then dies during that day before nightfall, will be of the people of Paradise; and whoever recites it during the night, with full certitude, and then dies that night before the morn, will be of the people of Paradise.'

THE EID AL-FITR PRAYER

IT IS RECOMMENDED that a person eat before going *Quduri,* 1/117-9 out to the place of the Eid prayer (*musalla*) on the first of Shawwal (*yawm al-fitr*). It is recommended that one bathe, wear scent, and dress in one's best clothes. When going to the place of the prayer, one does not chant the *takbirs* aloud on the road, according to Abu Hanifah; according to Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, one is to chant aloud. One is not to perform a supererogatory (*nafl*) prayer there until the Eid prayer itself is performed. The Eid prayer may be performed beginning from when the sun has risen into the sky, until the sun's zenith (*ẓawāl*); the time ends with the waning of the sun from its zenith.

The imam leads the congregation in a prayer of two

rak'ahs. He pronounces the opening *takbir*, and three more *takbirs* after it. He then recites the *Fatihah* and another chapter of the Koran (*surah*) with it. He then pronounces a single *takbir* with which he bows. In the second rak'ah, he begins with recitation of the *Fatihah* and a chapter (*surah*) of the Koran; upon completion of the recitation, he pronounces three *takbirs*; he then pronounces a fourth single *takbir* with which he bows. A person performing the prayer raises his hands for each pronouncement of *takbir*, in both of the Eid prayers.

The imam then delivers two sermons (*khutbah*) after the prayer, in which he teaches the congregation about the alms of Eid al-Fitr (*sadaqat al-fitr*) and its rules. Whoever misses the Eid prayer with the imam may not then make it up.

If the moon is obscured from the people of a locale, but they testify to the imam after the sun wanes from its zenith that the moon had in fact been sighted, the prayer is to be performed the next day. If something occurs which prevents the people from performing the prayer the next day as well, it is not performed the following day.

NIGHT VIGIL IN THE TEN DAYS OF DHU AL-HIJJAH

Mar. Fal., 325 **I**T IS RECOMMENDED that one perform the night vigil (*ihya'*) for the ten days of Dhu al-Hijjah.

This is based upon the saying of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace): "There are no days in which worship is more beloved to Allah Most High than the ten of Dhu al-Hijjah. Fasting each day of them is

equal to fasting an entire year, and standing in prayer each night of them is equal to standing in prayer on the Night of Power.⁸ He (Allah bless him and give him peace) also said that fasting on the Day of 'Arafah expiates the sins of two years, that which has past and that which is to come, while fasting on 'Ashura' expiates the sins of the year past.⁹

THE EID AL-ADHA PRAYER

IT IS RECOMMENDED on the day of the ritual slaughter (*yawm al-ad'ha*), that one bathe, wear scent, and refrain from eating until after one has completed the prayer. When going to the place of the prayer, one chants the *takbirs* aloud. Quduri,
1/117-20

The Eid al-Adha prayer is two rak'ahs, like the Eid al-Fitr prayer. The imam delivers two sermons after the prayer, in which he teaches the congregation about the ritual slaughter (*al-ad'hiyah*) and the chanting of the *takbirs* on the three days following Eid al-Adha (*ayyam al-tashriq*).

If something occurs which prevents the people from performing the prayer on the day of Adha, it is performed the next day, or the day after; it is not to be performed thereafter.

The chants of *takbir* are first performed after the dawn prayer (*fajr*) of the ninth of Dhu al-Hijjah (*yawm 'Arafah*). Their final performance is after the midafternoon prayer (*asr*) of the tenth of Dhu al-Hijjah (*yawm al-nahr*), according to Abu Hanifah; according to Abu Yusuf and Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with them both), their final performance is after the

mid-afternoon prayer ('*asr*') on the thirteenth of Dhu al-Hijjah (the third of the *ayyam al-tashriq*). The chants of *takbir*, which are to be recited immediately following every obligatory (*fard*) prayer, are as follows:

الله أكبرُ اللهُ أَكْبَرُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ، وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ اللهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ.

Allāhu akbaru 'Llāhu akbar(u), lā ilāha illā 'Llāh(u), wa 'Llāhu akbaru 'Llāhu akbar(u), wa li-'Llāhi 'l-ḥamd.
(‘Allah is great, Allah is great, There is no god save Allah; Allah is great, Allah is great, and to Allah belongs all praise’.)

PRAYERS REGARDING THE NATURAL WORLD

THE SOLAR ECLIPSE PRAYER

(SALAT AL-KUSUF)

WHEN THERE OCCURS a solar eclipse (*kusuf*), the *Quduri*,^{1/121} imam is to lead the congregation in a prayer of two rak'ahs, the form of which is like that of a supererogatory prayer. In each rak'ah, one bows once (*ruku'*). The imam is to prolong the recitation in each rak'ah. According to Abu Hanifah, the recitation is performed quietly, while Abu Yusuf and Muhammad hold that it is performed aloud. After the prayer is completed, the imam is to supplicate (*du'a'*) until the sun is revealed. The congregation is to be led by the same imam who normally leads them in the Friday prayer. If this imam is not in attendance, the people are to perform the prayer individually. No sermon is delivered.

There is no congregation for a lunar eclipse (*khusuf*); rather, each person is to pray individually.

THE PRAYER FOR RAIN

(AL-ISTISQA')

IT WAS ABU HANIFAH'S OPINION that there is no basis *Quduri & Lubab*,^{1/122-3} in the Prophetic practice (*sunnah*) for a prayer for

rain which is performed in congregation; if, however, people perform such a prayer individually, he held that the prayer is valid. For Abu Hanifah, 'praying for rain (*istisqa'*)' is through supplication (*du'a'*) and seeking Allah's forgiveness (*istighfar*).

Abu Yusuf and Muhammad (may Allah Most High have mercy upon them both) hold that the prayer for rain is performed by an imam leading a congregation in a two-rak'ah prayer. The imam is to recite aloud. After the prayer, he is to deliver a sermon. [Abu Yusuf holds that it is a single sermon, while Muhammad holds that he delivers two sermons; the majority of the sermon is to encourage seeking Allah's forgiveness (*istighfar*).] The sermon is to be followed by a supplication while facing the direction of prayer (*qiblah*).

The imam is to flip his cloak (*rida'*) around. [If the cloak has four corners, he is to turn it upside down; if it is round, like a *jubbah*, he wears the right side of it on his left and vice versa.] The members of the congregation do not flip their cloaks around.

- ¶ The cloak is flipped around as a symbol of man's indigence and neediness (*faqr*) to Allah, the Provider, in supplying them with water, the very material source of human life. 'And from water have We created every living thing' (Koran 21:30).

THE PRAYER OF FEAR FROM NATURE

(SALAT AL-KHAWF MIN AHWAL AL-TABI'AH)

Had. Nabi, 274-6* **I**BN 'ABBAS (may Allah be pleased with them both) relates: 'Never did a gale blow save that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) sat on his knees and said:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا رَحْمَةً وَلَا تَجْعَلْهَا عَذَابًا.

Allāhumma 'j'alhā raḥmatan wa lā taj'alhā 'adhābā(n). ('O Allah! Let it be a mercy, and make it not a punishment') (as narrated by al-Shafi'i and al-Tabarani).

Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) also relates that, during an earthquake, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) performed a prayer with six acts of bowing and four prostrations, saying: 'Such is the prayer of Allah's signs' (as narrated by al-Bayhaqi).

RULINGS

1. The first hadith of Ibn 'Abbas establishes the prerogative of God-consciousness and feeling fear of His power due to awe-inspiring acts of nature. The hadith mentions that strong gales blew; analogous to this are other such awesome natural occurrences, such as torrential rain, earthquakes, lightning, and severe thunder. At such moments, one should fill one's heart with feelings of God-consciousness and fear of His power, due to his saying, 'Never did a gale blow save that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) sat on his knees.'

2. It is recommended to supplicate to Allah when divine signs inspiring fear occur with the words

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا رَحْمَةً وَلَا تَجْعَلْهَا عَذَابًا.

Allāhumma 'j'alhā raḥmatan wa lā taj'alhā 'adhābā(n). ('O Allah! Let it be a mercy, and make it not a punishment'.)

3. It is recommended to take refuge in supererogatory prayers at the occurrence of fear-inspiring natural events; the jurists are in agreement as to this practice. However, one should perform such a prayer individually, and not in congregation, since praying in congregation has only been established by the sunnah for a solar eclipse.

4. The hadiths of Ibn 'Abbas ... (may Allah be pleased with them both) indicate that additional acts of bowing are to be performed in a prayer due to an earthquake, meaning, during the earthquake. This is the opinion of some scholars beyond the four Sunni schools of law (*madhhab*). However, the position of the majority of scholars is that one does not add any act of bowing to the regular singular act of bowing normally performed during a rak'ah. Any modification to the performance of the ritual prayer (*salah*) [an act of worship which is established by decisive proof] would require an equally unequivocal and decisive proof [which this singular hadith is not]. Rather, the scholars explain, the position related in this tradition is only the independent opinion (*ijtihad*) of the Companion, who arrived at this position by analogy to the solar eclipse prayer.

5. These hadiths encourage an increase in one's performance of remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allah Most High, of supplication (*du'a'*), of seeking forgiveness (*istighfar*), of supererogatory prayer, of sending benedictions upon the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), and of all other good acts. For all of these are means of lifting calamity, of easing hardship, and of being rid of fearful things. This has been pointed out in the hadith narrated in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*: 'If

you experience such a matter, then supplicate to Allah Most High, and extol Him, and pray to Him, and give in charity.' It is also mentioned in *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*: 'Make remembrance of Allah Most High.' Al-Bukhari and Muslim have also narrated from Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'If you experience any such matter, then run to His remembrance, to supplication of Him, and to seeking His forgiveness.'

PRAYERS OF DIVINE AID

THE PRAYER OF GUIDANCE

(AL-ISTIKHARAH)

JABIR B. 'ABD-ALLAH (may Allah be pleased with them *Halabi, 430-1* both) relates that: 'The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) used to teach us the prayer of guidance for all matters, just as he would teach us a chapter (*surah*) of the Koran, saying: "When one of you is concerned with a matter, let him pray two non-obligatory rak'ahs, and say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ. اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي—أَوْ قَالَ عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ—فَاقْدُرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ. وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي—أَوْ قَالَ عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ—فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ وَاقْدُرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي بِهِ.

"*Allāhumma innī astakhīruka bi-'ilmika wa astaqriruka bi-qudratika wa as'aluka min faḍlika 'l-'aẓīm(i), fa-innaka taqdiru wa lā aqdiru wa ta'lamu wa lā a'lamu wa anta 'al-lāmu 'l-ghayyūb. Allāhumma in kunta ta'lamu anna hādha 'l-amra khayrun lī fī dīnī wa ma'āshī wa 'āqibati amrī*"—or, he may have said, "*ājili amrī wa ājilihi*"—"fa'qdurhu lī wa yassirhu lī thumma bārik lī fih(i); wa in kunta ta'lamu anna hādha 'l-amra sharrun lī fī dīnī wa ma'āshī wa 'āqibati amrī"—or, he may have said, "*ājili amrī wa ājilihi*"—"fa'ṣrifhu 'annī wa'ṣrifnī 'anhu wa'qdur lī 'l-khayra haythu kāna thumma arḍinī bih(i).

("O Allah, I seek Your guidance as to what is best by means of Your knowledge, and seek power to act by means of Your power, and I ask You by Your immense favour; for You are all-powerful, and I am not; You are all-knowing, and I am not; and You are the Knower of the Unseen Worlds. O Allah, if You know this matter to be good for me in my religion, livelihood, and final outcome"—or, he may have said, "in the short term and the long term of my case"—"then bring it to pass for me, facilitate it for me, and bless me with abundance therein. And if You know this matter to be evil for me in my religion, livelihood, and final outcome"—or, he may have said, "in the short term and the long term of my case"—"then keep it far from me, keep me far from it, bring about that which is good for me whatever it may be, and make me pleased with it.")

'He said, "One then mentions his need"' (as narrated by al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah).

One should join between the two narrations by saying '*wa 'aqibati amri wa 'ajilihi wa ajilih(i)*'. In regards to performing the pilgrimage, jihad, and other acts of

good, the prayer of guidance is understood as specifying the time in which one should perform it, not the performance of the act itself. One should then act according with that which his heart is disposed towards. One should repeat the prayer up to seven times.

The narrator's saying '*for all matters*' applies to both insignificant and weighty matters. It is a sunnah to perform the prayer of guidance in all matters, for crucially important outcomes may result from a matter one deems insignificant. Had. Nabi, 420-1

The narrator's saying '*non-obligatory*' applies to any prayer which is a sunnah. Thus, if one were to supplicate immediately following the sunnah prayer which precedes the noon prayer (*zuhr*) or the sunnah prayer which follows it, or after the sunnah of the midafternoon prayer (*asr*), or after any other sunnah prayer, this would suffice: his saying '*non-obligatory*' applies to all of these. The condition, however, is that the person explicitly intend that the prayer performed simultaneously count as both the sunnah prayer in question and a prayer of guidance. He intends in his heart, 'I pray the such-and-such sunnah along with the prayer of guidance.'

The hadith does not specify what is to be read in each rak'ah after the *Fatihah*. As such, one may recite whatever one wishes. Al-Nawawi has selected the recitation of *Qul ya ayyuha al-kafirun* [Koran 109] in the rak'ah, and *Qul huwa Allahu ahad* [Koran 112] in the second. This is purely his individual juristic opinion, which perhaps Imam al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy upon him) arrived at by noticing that in similar two-rak'ah prayers, such as those before the dawn prayer (*fajr*) and after the sunset prayer (*maghrib*), it is recommended (*mandub*)

that one recite these particular chapters of the Koran (*surah*).

The apparent meaning of the hadith is that the specified supplication is to be recited after completion of the prayer....

The hadith does not require one who is seeking Allah's guidance on a matter through this prayer to do anything other than perform the prayer and recite the supplication. It is no different than any other supplication that a Muslim recites. As such, the scholars have affirmed that one should act in accordance with that upon which his heart rests. One does not wait to see a dream, nor rely upon another person's performance of the supplication for one's own matter. Rather, the prayer of guidance is a plea to Allah that He choose that which is good for one. One should act upon it if he finds his heart so disposed. If it is facilitated, then he will find good therein, and he should accept it and rejoice. If it is not facilitated, he should have certainty that such a result is what is best for him; one accepts it, and gives thanks for the outcome.

In addition, if one does see a dream in which he is encouraged towards a particular course of action, then fine and well, such as if he sees something explicitly confirming his choice, or if he sees the colours green or white. If, however, one sees the colours black or red, then he should refrain from that action.

If nothing becomes explicitly manifest to him, or his heart does not settle upon a particular course of action, then he is to repeat the prayer for guidance up to seven times, or beyond, for the Companions (may Allah's pleasure be upon them) used to repeat it.

THE PRAYER OF NEED

(SALAT AL-HAJAH)

ANOTHER RECOMMENDED PRAYER is the prayer of need *Halabi, 432* (*salat al-hajah*).

'Abd-Allah b. Abi Awfa narrates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'Whoever has a need to be fulfilled by Allah or by one of the sons of Adam should perform ablutions with perfection. He should then pray two rak'ahs, after which he praises Allah, sends benedictions upon the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), and says:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ، سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ،
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، أَسْأَلُكَ مُوجِبَاتِ رَحْمَتِكَ وَعَزَائِمَ
مَغْفِرَتِكَ وَالْغَنِيمَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ بَرٍّ وَالسَّلَامَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ إِثْمٍ، لَا تَدْعُ لِي
ذَنْبًا إِلَّا غَفَرْتَهُ وَلَا هَمًّا إِلَّا فَرَجْتَهُ وَلَا حَاجَةً لَكَ فِيهَا رِضَى إِلَّا
قَضَيْتَهَا يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

Lā ilāha illā 'Llāhu 'l-ḥalīmu 'l-karīm(u); subḥāna Rabbi 'l-'arshi 'l-'aẓīm(i); al-ḥamdu li-'Llāhi Rabbi 'l-'ālamīn(a); as'aluka mūjibāti raḥmatika wa 'azā'ima maghfiratika wa 'l-ghanīmata min kulli birr(in), wa-'ssalāmata min kulli ithm(in), lā tada' li dhanban illā ghafartah(u), wa lā hamman illā farrajtah(u), wa lā ḥajatan laka fihā riḍan illā qaḍaytahā yā arḥama 'r-rāhimīn(a).

("There is no god but Allah, the Magnanimous, the Generous; glory be to the Lord of the Majestic Throne; praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. I ask You (O Al-

lah) for everything that leads to Your mercy, the fulfillment of Your clemency, the spoils resulting from Your reverence, and protection from all acts of disobedience. Leave not any sin of mine save that You forgive it, nor any concern save that You relieve it, nor any need in which there is Your good pleasure save that You fulfill it, O You who are Most Merciful'.)

(The hadith is narrated by Ibn Majah and al-Tirmidhi, who deemed it weak.)

THE HADITH OF THE BLIND MAN

'Uthman b. Hunayf narrates that a blind man came to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and said, 'Pray to Allah for me, that He may heal me.' He said: 'If you wish, I shall pray; and if you wish, you may remain patient, for patience is better for you.' The man replied, 'Then pray to Him.' So the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) commanded the man to perform ablutions (*wudu'*) with perfection, and to recite the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ وَأَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيِّ الرَّحْمَةِ، يَا مُحَمَّدُ
إِنِّي أَتَوَجَّهُ بِكَ إِلَى رَبِّي فِي حَاجَتِي هَذِهِ لِتُقْضَى لِي، اللَّهُمَّ فَشَفِّعْهُ
فِي.

Allāhumma innī as'aluka wa atawajjahu ilayka bi-nabīyika Muḥammad(in), nabīyi 'r-raḥma(ti); yā Muḥammad(u), innī atawajjahu bika ilā Rabbī fi ḥājati hādhihi li-tuqḍā li; Allāhumma fa-shaffi'hu fi(ya).

(O Allah, I ask of You and turn to You through

Your prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy. O Muhammad, through you do I turn to my Lord for this need of mine, that it may be fulfilled. O Allah, grant him intercession for me.')

(This hadith has also been narrated by Ibn Majah and al-Tirmidhi; al-Tirmidhi deemed it well or rigorously authenticated (*hasan sahih*).)

MANY OF THE GREAT SCHOLARS have reported: 'We have performed this prayer, and our needs were fulfilled.' *Had. 'Imad, 657*

This has been mentioned in *al-Multaqat* and *al-Tājnis*, whose author is that of the *Hidayah*, just as it has been mentioned in many of the works of legal responses (*fatāwa*). I say: I made this prayer a habit during my days as a student, in hope that I might become one of the servants of Noble Sacred Knowledge. As a result, Allah Most High bestowed His favour upon me out of His immense grace, to Him be all praise.

THE PRAYER FOR STRENGTHENING THE MEMORY

(SALAT TAQWIYAT AL-HIFZ)

'ABD-ALLAH B. 'ABBAS (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrates, 'One day, while we were with the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace), 'Ali b. Abi Talib came to him and said, "O you who are like my father and mother to me, this Koran has escaped my breast. I find myself unable to master it!" The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said to him: "O Abu al-Hasan, shall I not teach you some words by which Allah will benefit

you, by which He will benefit all those to whom you teach it, and which will firmly fix in your breast that which you have learnt?" He said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah, teach me."

'He said: "On the eve of a Friday, rise in the last third of the night if you are able, for it is a time of witnessed spiritual benefit, in which one's supplications are answered; as my brother Jacob once said to his sons regarding it, 'I shall seek forgiveness from my Lord for you' (Koran 12:98) until Friday eve. If you are unable, then rise in the middle of the night, and if you are unable, then rise in the beginning of the night. Then, pray four rak'ahs, reciting in the first rak'ah the *Fatihah* and *Ya Sin* (Koran 36); in the second, the *Fatihah* and *Ha Mim al-Dukhan* (Koran 44); in the third, the *Fatihah* and *Alif Lam Mim Tanzil al-Sajdah* (Koran 32); and in the fourth, the *Fatihah* and *Tabarak al-Mufassal* (Koran 67). Upon completing the testification of faith (*tashahhud*), praise Allah, perfecting your extolling of Him (*thana*); send benedictions upon me in a most perfect fashion, and upon all of the other prophets; seek forgiveness for the believers, male and female, and for your brethren in faith who have preceded you; and then say at the end of this:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِي بِرَحْمَةِ الْمَعَاصِي أَبَدًا مَا أَبْقَيْتَنِي، وَارْحَمْنِي أَنْ أَتَكَلَّفَ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنِي، وَارْزُقْنِي حُسْنَ النَّظَرِ فِيمَا يُرْضِيكَ عَنِّي. اللَّهُمَّ بَدِّعِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ وَالْعِزَّةِ الَّتِي لَا تُرَامُ، أَسْأَلُكَ يَا اللَّهُ يَا رَحْمَنُ بِجَلَالِكَ وَنُورِ وَجْهِكَ أَنْ تُلْزِمَ قَلْبِي حِفْظَ كِتَابِكَ كَمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي وَارْزُقْنِي أَنْ أَتْلُوهُ عَلَى النَّحْوِ

الَّذِي يُرْضِيكَ عَنِّي. اللَّهُمَّ بَدِّعِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ وَالْعِزَّةِ الَّتِي لَا تُرَامُ. أَسْأَلُكَ يَا اللَّهُ يَا رَحْمَنُ بِجَلَالِكَ وَنُورِ وَجْهِكَ أَنْ تُنَوِّرَ بَكِتَابِكَ بَصْرِي وَأَنْ تُطَلِّقَ بِهِ لِسَانِي وَأَنْ تُفَرِّجَ بِهِ عَنْ قَلْبِي وَأَنْ تَشْرَحَ بِهِ صَدْرِي وَأَنْ تَغْسِلَ بِهِ بَدَنِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُعِينُنِي عَلَى الْحَقِّ غَيْرُكَ وَلَا يُؤْتِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ. وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ.

Allāhumma 'rḥamnī bi-tarki 'l-ma'āṣi abadan mā abqay-tanī, wa'rḥamnī an atakallafa mā lā ya'nīnī, wa'rzuqnī ḥusna 'n-naẓari fīmā yurḍika 'annī. Allāhumma badi'a 's-samāwāti wa'l-arḍi dhā 'l-jalālī wa'l-ikrāmī wa'l-'izzatī 'llatī lā turām(u), as'aluka yā Allāhu yā Raḥmānu bi-jalālīka wa nūri wajhīka an tulzima qalbī ḥifẓa kitābīka kamā 'allamtanī wa'rzuqnī an atluwahu 'alā 'n-naḥwi 'lladhī yurḍika 'annī. Allāhumma badi'a 's-samāwāti wa'l-arḍi dhā 'l-jalālī wa'l-ikrāmī wa'l-'izzatī 'llatī lā turām(u), as'aluka yā Allāhu yā Raḥmānu bi-jalālīka wa nūri wajhīka an tunawwira bi-kitābīka baṣarī wa an tuṭliqa bihi lisānī wa an tufarrija bihi 'an qalbī wa an tashraḥa bihi ṣadrī wa an taghsila bihi badanī fa-innahu lā yu'inunī 'alā 'l-haqqi ḡhayruka wa lā yu'tihi illā ant(a), wa lā ḥawla wa lā qūwata illā bi-'Llāhi 'l-'Alīyyi 'l-'Azīm(i).

("O Allah, have mercy upon me by facilitating foregoing all disobedience so long as You grant me life; have mercy upon me that I be sufficed from being troubled by that which is of no concern to me; and grant me perfect insight into that by which You will be pleased with me.

"O Allah, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, O You of Majesty and Magnanimity and Might which none can achieve; I ask You, O Allah, O Merciful, by Your Majesty and the Light of Your Countenance, that You fasten my heart to the memorization of Your Book as You have taught me, and grant me that I recite it in the fashion by which You will be pleased with me.

"O Allah, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, O You of Majesty and Magnanimity and Might which none can achieve; I ask You, O Allah, O Merciful, by Your Majesty and the Light of Your Countenance, that You illuminate my sight through Your Book, that You untether my tongue in recitation of it, that You emancipate my heart by means of it, that You make expansive my breast through it, and that you employ my body in it; for none can aid me upon the Truth save You, and none can grant it save You. And there is no power or strength save by Allah, the High, the Most Great.)

"O Abu al-Hasan, do this for three, five or seven Fridays, and you will be answered by the leave of Allah. By He who has sent me with the Truth, it has never failed a single believer."

Ibn 'Abbas said, 'And by Allah, no more than five or seven weeks had passed save that 'Ali came to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) in a similar gathering, and said, "O Messenger of Allah! In the past, I used to only be able to learn four or so verses of the Koran (*ayah*), and if I attempted to review them, they escaped me. Today, I am able to learn fourty or so verses, and if I review them, it is as if the Book of Allah is before my eyes. I used to hear a hadith, but when I would try to repeat it, it would escape me. Today, I am able to hear a number of hadiths, and when I then relate them, I do not misplace a single letter."

"The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said in response: "By the Lord of the Kaabah, a believer you are, O Abu al-Hasan" (as narrated by al-Tirmidhi and al-Hakim).

...The scholars of hadith differed greatly as to the status of this hadith, splitting into irreconcilable groups.... Personally, I am of the opinion that the hadith is weak (*da'if*) [due to one of the narrators' not having explicitly mentioned that he heard the hadith from his sources, with the resulting possibility that one of his sources is a weak narrator], but I completely and utterly reject the opinion that it is fabricated (*mawdu'*).

DERIVED RULINGS

This hadith treats a matter of great benefit, one which many people turn to medication in order to achieve—namely, the strengthening of one's memory. Even though the hadith is weak (*da'if*), I see no harm in acting upon it, as it is known amongst the majority of scholars that one may act upon a weak hadith which treats supererogatory actions, so long as three conditions are met:

(a) **That the weakness of the hadith not be excessive.** A hadith is deemed 'excessively weak' if the narrator was known for severe confusion when attempting to transmit hadiths, or was accused of lying. The hadith under consideration here does not contain such excessive weakness. Rather, the weakness is merely due to the possibility of a narrator having been omitted from the chain of narrators, and that this omitted narrator might have been criticized.

(b) **That one act upon the hadith out of precaution,** not in belief that the action is firmly established by the

sunnah and thus binding upon one, which we hereby make note of in this case.

(c) **That the action be incorporated under a universal maxim of the Sacred Law, or under a rule of the Sacred Law which is practised.** This hadith fulfills this condition, as it is comprised of a countenanced act of worship and a supplication which is likewise countenanced. We would like to emphasize the fulfillment of this condition when acting upon this particular hadith. The following comments elucidate how this is to be achieved:

1. The hadith encourages those who are able to perform the prayer and the supplication on Friday's eve, in the latter part of the night. This posed no problem for our master 'Ali, for he was accustomed to rising at night for prayer. As for one who is unaccustomed to the night vigil, he should also rise the night before or the night after Friday's eve, because the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) forbade singling out Friday's eve for the performance of night worship.

2. The hadith specifies the four mentioned chapters of the Koran (*surah*), and arranges a chapter for each rak'ah. The order presented in the hadith contravenes the order of these chapters as arranged in the Koran. It is a general rule that, when praying, one should observe the order of the chapters as arranged in the Koran, as it is a recommended act (*mustahabb*). That being said, it is permissible to act contrary to a recommended practice, if done sparingly; it has been related that he (Allah bless him and give him peace) did so himself on occasion, in order to make clear that doing so is not impermissible.

As such, even if one does read the chapters in the order specified in this hadith [and not in the order ar-

ranged in the Koran], one's actions would still be valid. This is especially true considering that the various narrations of this hadith differ as to the order of these chapters. In the narration of the *Mustadrak* of al-Hakim, the Koranic chapter (*surah*) *al-Sajdah* is brought forward into the second rak'ah, and *al-Dukhan* is placed into the third.

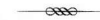
As for one who does not have these chapters of the Koran memorized, it is the opinion of the present author that one may validly recite other chapters, because the purpose ultimately is to perform a ritual prayer before reciting the supplication.

¶ If one is not able to recite the supplication from memory, it is permissible according to the Shafi'i rite to read the supplication from a sheet of paper or other medium whilst in the ritual prayer. According to the Hanafi school, reciting from anything other than memory whilst in the ritual prayer is not permissible; as such, a person practising according to the Hanafi rite who does not have the supplication memorized should read it immediately after the closing salutations (*taslimah*) of the ritual prayer.

3. In addition to performing this supplication for the purpose of strengthening one's ability to memorize Koran, one may also employ it for learning and memorizing other permissible types of knowledge. To do so, one simply mentions in one's supplication what one wishes to learn by heart. The specification of Koran in the above hadith is not meant to limit this prayer to this one purpose, but was simply mentioned in response to the question asked.

Experience has shown what we have mentioned to be true. The hadith master Abu al-Hasan b. 'Arraq said, 'I have been informed by more than one person that they tested the supplication and found it to be true.'

PRAYERS PROPER TO CERTAIN ACTIONS



THE PRAYER AFTER ABLUTIONS

(SALAT SHUKR AL-WUDU')

OF THE ETIQUETTE of ablutions (*wudu'*) is that one immediately follow the ablutions with a supererogatory prayer, even if merely two rak'ahs. This is based upon the hadith of 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated in the two *Sahih* works of al-Bukhari and Muslim in which he requested water be brought for ablutions, which he proceeded to perform. He then said, 'I witnessed the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) perform ablutions similar to the one which I have just performed, following which the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: "Whoever makes ablutions similar to the one which I have just performed, then stands and performs two rak'ahs in which he does not allow his mind to wander, Allah will forgive him all his previous sins."'

'Uqbah b. 'Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) also reports: 'We were once tasked with grazing the camels. It was my shift, so I made my way at night. I came across the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) standing and speaking to a group of people. I heard him say: "There is no Muslim who performs his ablutions with perfection, then rises to

Halabi, 37

pray two rak'ahs in which he turns to Allah in his prayer with both body and heart, save that Paradise will necessarily be his" (as narrated by Muslim).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said to Bilal: 'O Bilal, tell me of an act that you have done in Islam for which you are most hopeful that it may be accepted, for I have heard the footfall of your sandals ahead of me in Paradise.' He said, 'I have no action in which I place greater hope than in the fact that whenever I perform ablutions during night or day, I always perform as many prayers as have been determined for me while remaining in a state of purity from those ablutions' (as narrated by al-Bukhari).

THE PRAYER OF GREETING THE MOSQUE

(TAHIYAT AL-MASJID)

Halabi, 430

ANOTHER RECOMMENDED PRAYER is the two-rak'ah prayer offered as a greeting to the mosque upon entering it. The Prophet (upon whom be blessings and peace) said: 'If one of you enters the mosque, he should not sit until he has performed two rak'ahs' (rigorously authenticated, by agreement of the scholars of hadith).

It is stated in *Mukhtasar al-Bahr*: 'A person's entering the mosque with the intention of performing an obligatory (*fard*) prayer, or of joining another's, suffices from having to perform the prayer of greeting the mosque. Rather, one is commanded to perform the prayer of greeting the mosque only if one enters it without the intention of performing any particular prayer. It suf-

fices that one pray two such rak'ahs once in a day. It is not to be repeated if one repeatedly enters the mosque.'

In the Hanafi school, it is not too late to perform the prayer if one has already sat, though it is better to perform it before doing so.... Upon entering the mosque, it is recommended to say:

Tahtawi, 320

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ.

Allāhumma 'ftaḥ lī abwāba raḥmatik(a) ('O Allah, open unto me the gates of Your mercy'); and upon exiting:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ.

Allāhumma innī as'aluka min faḍlik(a) ('O Allah, I ask You of Your bounty').

THE PRAYER BEFORE TRAVELLING

(SALAT AL-SAFAR)

ANOTHER RECOMMENDED PRAYER is the two-rak'ah prayer before travelling. Mut'im b. al-Miqdam narrates that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'No one leaves his family in the charge of anything greater than two rak'ahs that he prays at the family home when he intends to travel' (as narrated by al-Tabarani).

Halabi, 431

THE PRAYER UPON RETURNING FROM TRAVEL

Halabi, 431 **A**NOTHER RECOMMENDED PRAYER is the two-rak'ah prayer upon returning from travel. Ka'b b. Malik narrates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) never used to return from a journey save during the day, at midmorning. Upon returning, his first course of action was to go to the mosque and pray two rak'ahs, after which he would rest (as narrated by Muslim).

THE PRAYER OF ENTERING OR EXITING ONE'S HOME

Tahtawi, 326 **I**F ONE ENTERS one's own home, it is recommended that he not sit until he has prayed two rak'ahs, as is mentioned in *al-Siyar al-kabir*.

Nih. Mur., 656 One performs the prayer when entering and exiting his house in order to protect oneself from tribulations (*fitnah*) which may result from entering or exiting the home.

PRAYERS OF MOMENTOUS OCCASIONS

THE WEDDING NIGHT PRAYER

(RAK'ATAY LAYLAT AL-ZAFAT)

ABU WA'IL RELATES that a man once came to 'Abd-Allah ibn Mas'ud and said, 'I have married a woman, and I am afraid that she may come to resent me.' 'Abd-Allah replied, 'Mutual love is from Allah, while resentment is from the Devil, in order that he may cause people to hate that which Allah has made permissible. If she is brought in to your chambers, commend her to offer two rak'ahs in prayer with you. Then recite:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِي أَهْلِي وَبَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِي وَارِزُفِي مِنْهُمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنِّي. اللَّهُمَّ اجْمَعْ بَيْنَنَا مَا جَمَعْتَ إِلَى خَيْرٍ وَفَرِّقْ بَيْنَنَا إِذَا فَرَّقْتَ إِلَى خَيْرٍ.

Allāhumma bārik lī fī ahli wa bārik lahum fī(ya), wa'rzuqnī minhum wa'rzuqhum minnī. Allāhumma 'jma' baynanā mā jama'ta ilā khayr(in), wa farriq baynanā idhā farraqta ilā khayr(in). ('O Allah, bless me in my family, and bless my family in me; and provide for me by means of them, and provide for them by means of me. O Allah, so long as You bring us together, then let it be with good; and

*Musannaf,
6/191: 10461
& Muj. Kab.,
9/230: 8993*

if You separate between us, then let it be with good'.)

THE FUNERAL PRAYER

(SALAT AL-JANAZAH)

*Quduri &
Lubab,
1/130-2*

THE PERSON MOST SUITED to lead a funeral prayer is: (1) the ruler (*sultan*), if present; if not, then (2) the judge, if present; if not, then it is preferred (*mustahabb*) that it be led by (3) the imam of the neighbourhood; if not, then by (4) the male guardian of the deceased (*wali*). If anyone other than the male guardian or the ruler leads the prayer, the male guardian may repeat the prayer. If the male guardian performs the prayer, none may perform the prayer after him.

If the deceased is buried without the funeral prayer having been performed for him, the prayer may be performed at his place of burial. The funeral prayer is not performed in a congregational mosque (*masjid jama'ah*).

HOW TO PERFORM THE FUNERAL PRAYER

The procedures for performing the funeral prayer are that: (a) one say '*Allahu akbar*' [which is the only time in which one raises one's hands], immediately after which one praises Allah Most High [e.g. by saying '*subhānaka 'llāhumma wa bi-ḥamdika wa tabāraka 'smuka wa ta'ālā jadduka wa lā ilāha ghayruk(a)*' ('O Allah, glory and praise be to You; most Blessed be Your name; exalted be Your Majesty; there is no god but You')]; (b) one then say '*Allahu akbar*' a second time, after which one recites the benedictions upon the Prophet (Allah

bless him and give him peace); (c) one then say '*Allahu akbar*' a third time, after which one supplicates for one-self, for the deceased, and for all the Muslims; (d) and finally, one say '*Allahu akbar*' a fourth time, after which one recites the closing salutations of the prayer.

NOTE THAT THE SUPPLICATION to be recited after the third *takbir* is not specified; the only condition is that the supplication be regarding matters of the next life. However, in one tradition, 'Awf b. Malik relates that he once performed the funeral prayer with the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), and memorized the following words from the Prophet's supplication: *Lubab, 1/131*

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ وَعَافِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنْهُ وَأَكْرِمْ نُزُلَهُ وَوَسِّعْ
مَدْخَلَهُ وَاغْسِلْهُ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ وَنَقِّهِ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنْقَى
الثَّوْبُ الْاَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ، وَأَبْدِلْهُ دَارًا خَيْرًا مِنْ دَارِهِ وَأَهْلًا
خَيْرًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَزَوْجًا خَيْرًا مِنْ زَوْجِهِ، وَأَدْخِلْهُ الْجَنَّةَ، وَأَعِذْهُ
مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَعَذَابِ النَّارِ.

*Allāhumma 'ghfir lahu wa'rḥamhu wa 'āfihī wa'fu 'anhu
wa akrim nuzulahu wa wassi' madkhalahu wa'ghsilhu bi-
'l-mā'i wa'th-thalji wa'l-baradi wa naqqihi mina 'l-khaṭāyā
kamā yunaqqā 'th-thawbu 'l-abyadu mina 'd-danas(i), wa
abdilhu dāran khayran min dārihi wa ahlan khayran min
ahlihi wa zawjan khayran min zawjih(i), wa adkhlilhu 'l-
janna(ta), wa a'idh'hu min 'adhābi 'l-qabri wa 'adhābi 'n-
nār.*

('O Allah, grant him forgiveness, mercy, well-being,

and clemency; ennoble his resting place and make expansive his place of entry; wash him in water and snow and hail, and cleanse him from all misdeeds just as a white garment is cleansed from soil. Exchange his worldly home for a more excellent home, his kin for more excellent kin, and his spouse for a more excellent spouse. Enter him into the Garden, and protect him from the torment of the grave and the torment of the hellfire.')

- ¶ In the case of the deceased being a woman, the masculine Arabic pronouns '-hu' and '-hi' in the prayer above would be replaced by their feminine form, '-hā'. Thus, '*Allāhumma 'ghfir lahā wa'rḥamhā wa 'āfiḥā...*' ('O Allah, grant her forgiveness, mercy, well-being...'), etc.

THE PRAYER OF THE CONDEMNED

(SALAT AL-QATL)

Tahtawi, 326

ANOTHER RECOMMENDED PRAYER is the prayer of one who is condemned to death. If a Muslim is tested by such a calamity, it is recommended that he pray a two-rak'ah prayer and seek forgiveness for his sins, so that his final actions in this life be prayer and seeking forgiveness.

PRAYERS OF SPIRITUAL ASCENT

THE PROSTRATION OF GRATITUDE

(SAJDAT AL-SHUKR)

ABU DAWUD, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, and al-Hakim narrate that 'the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) used to fall in prostration to Allah Most High if he received a matter which pleased him'. *Had. 'Imad, 666*

The prostration of gratitude should be performed when one has received a manifest blessing, when one has been blessed by Allah Most High with wealth or progeny, when an affliction has been averted, and so forth. *Radd. Muh., 1/332*

In such cases, it is recommended that one prostrate to Allah Most High out of gratitude, facing the direction of prayer (*qiblah*), and praise and glorify Allah Most High while prostrating [i.e. by saying '*al-ḥamdu li-'Llāh*' and '*subḥāna 'Llāh*', respectively]. One then raises one's head from the prostration into a sitting position, just as one does after a prostration due to Koran recitation (*sajdat al-tilawah*).

This is the relied-upon position, and it is the position of the Two Companions. As for Abu Hanifah, it has been related in *al-Muḥit* that he is reported to have said, 'I do not consider it to be required (*wajib*), because if it had truly been required to prostrate due to a blessing,

we would be required to prostrate at every moment of our lives, for the blessings of Allah Most High upon His servants are continuous and never-ending. [If we were required to prostrate for every blessing], continuous prostration would be unbearable and impossible to observe.'

... The position which is apparently more correct is that it is a recommended act (*mustahabb*), as explicitly stated by Muhammad, since a number of hadiths have been related regarding it, and it was practised by Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Ali....

However, it is disliked that the prostration of thanks be performed immediately after a ritual prayer. It has been related at the end of *Sharh al-Munyah*, quoting al-Zahidi's commentary on *al-Quduri*: 'Performing a prostration of gratitude without any apparent cause is not considered an act of devotion, nor is it, however, disliked. Performing it after a ritual prayer is disliked, because the ignorant will come to believe that it is a sunnah or an obligation. It is a rule that all permissible actions (*mubah*) which lead to such confusion become disliked to perform (*makruh*).'

THE PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

(SALAT AL-ISTIGHFAR, *or* AL-TAWBAH)

Tahtawi, 326

ANOTHER RECOMMENDED PRAYER is the prayer of repentance for a transgression (*ma'siyah*) which a person commits. The basis of this is 'Ali's narrating from Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: 'There is no servant

who commits a sin, performs ablutions with perfection, prays two rak'ahs, then seeks forgiveness from Allah, save that he is forgiven' (as narrated by Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, and others).

THE PRAYER OF GLORIFICATION

(SALAT AL-TASBIH, *or* AL-TASABIH)

¶ The description of the prayer of glorification in the first narration which follows is how the prayer is performed according to the Shafi'i rite (*madhhab*) and others. For the details of how to perform this prayer according to the Hanafi rite, see the narration of Ibn al-Mubarak below.

ANOTHER RECOMMENDED PRAYER is the prayer of glorification (*salat al-tasbih*). Ibn 'Abbas narrates that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said to al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib: 'O uncle, shall I not give you, and grant you, and confer upon you a tremendous matter? Shall I not do this for you? There are ten virtuous actions which, if you perform them, Allah will forgive you your sins—the first of them and the last, the old and the new, the accidental and the intentional, the minor and the major, the hidden and the manifest. Namely, you should pray four rak'ahs. In each rak'ah, you are to read the *Fatihah* and a chapter of the Koran (*surah*). Upon completing this recitation, say the following fifteen times while standing:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.

Subhāna 'Llāh(i) wa'l-ḥamdu li-'Llāh(i) wa lā ilāha illā 'Llāh(u) wa 'Llāhu akbar(u). ('Glory be to Allah; all

praise is due to Allah; there is no god but Allah; and Allah is Great.)

'You then bow (*ruku'*) and recite the same ten times while bowing. Then, raise your head from bowing, standing straight, and recite the same ten times. Then, fall into prostration (*sujud*), and recite the same ten times. Then, raise your head into the sitting position from the prostration, and recite the same ten times. Then, prostrate again, and recite the same ten times. Then, raise your head from prostration into the sitting position, and recite the same ten times before you stand. Thus, they total seventy-five in each rak'ah; and you are to do the same in each of the four rak'ahs. If you are able to perform this prayer once every day, then do so; if not, then once a week; if not, then once a month; if not, then once a year; if not, then once in your lifetime' (as narrated by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, al-Tirmidhi rating it singularly unique (*gharib*)).

THE NARRATION OF IBN AL-MUBARAK

Al-Tirmidhi said: 'We heard directly from Ahmad b. 'Ubaydah that he heard directly from Ibn Wahb that the latter said, "I asked 'Abd-Allah b. al-Mubarak about the prayer in which one glorifies Allah. He said, 'One recites the opening *takbir*, then recites:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ.

Subhānaka 'Llāhumma wa bi-ḥamdika wa tabāraka 'smuka wa ta'ālā jadduka wa lā ilāha ghayruk(a). ('O Allah,

glory and praise be to You; most Blessed be Your name; exalted be Your Majesty; there is no god but You.)

'One then recites, fifteen times, "*Subhāna 'Llāh(i) wa'l-ḥamdu li-'Llāh(i) wa lā ilāha illā 'Llāh(u) wa'Llāhu akbar(u)*". He then recites "*a'ūdhu bi-'Llāhi mina 'sh-shayṭāni 'r-rajīm*" ("I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Devil"), then "*bismi 'Llāhi 'r-Raḥmāni 'r-Raḥīm*" ("In the name of Allah, Most Merciful and Compassionate") and the *Fatihah*, followed by a chapter of the Koran (*surah*). He then recites, ten times, "*Subhāna 'Llāh(i) wa'l-ḥamdu li-'Llāh(i) wa lā ilāha illā 'Llāh(u) wa'Llāhu akbar(u)*."

'One then bows, reciting it ten times. He then raises his head from bowing, standing straight, and recites it ten times. He then falls into prostration, and recites it ten times. He then raises his head from prostration into the sitting position, and recites it ten times. He then prostrates a second time, and recites it ten times. One thus prays four rak'ahs in this fashion; they are a total of seventy-five formulas of glorification (*tasbih*)."

In another narration of 'Abd-Allah b. al-Mubarak, he says, 'One begins one's bowing by saying "*subhāna Rabbiya 'l-'Aẓīm*" ("glorious is my Lord, Most Great"), and one's prostration by saying "*subhāna Rabbiya 'l-'Alā*" ("glorious is my Lord, Most High"), thrice each; one then recites the formulas of glorification.'

It was asked of Ibn al-Mubarak, 'If one makes a mistake out of forgetfulness during this prayer, does one recite ten formulas of glorification in each of the two prostrations [of forgetfulness (*sajdat al-sahw*)]?' He answered, 'No, exactly three hundred formulas of glorification are recited.'

This description of the prayer as related by Ibn al-

Mubarak is the same mentioned in *Mukhtasar al-Bahr*. In addition, it is the description which perfectly corresponds to our Hanafi rite (*madhhab*), since it does not necessitate that one perform a sitting in which one rests (*jalsat istirahah*) before one stands to the next rak'ah, an action that is disliked (*makruh*) according to the Hanafi rite, as has been established elsewhere.

THE PRAYER OF FILIAL PIETY

(SALAT BIRR AL-WALIDAYN)

Nih. Mur.,
656 **M**Y FATHER (may Allah Most High have mercy upon him) said, '... It is mentioned in *Sharh al-Shir'ah*: "The prayer for one's parents (*salat al-walidayn*) is a sunnah, due to the saying of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace): 'Whoever prays two rak'ahs on the eve of Friday, between the sunset (*maghrib*) and nightfall ('*isha*') prayers, in which he recites in each rak'ah the *Fatihah* once, *Ayat al-kursi* (Koran 2:255) fifteen times, *Qul huwa Allahu ahad* (Koran 112) fifteen times; sends benedictions upon the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) twenty times; and then intends that the reward be for his parents—whoever does this will have fulfilled the rights of his parents and perfected his filial piety, even if he had been undutiful towards them. Allah Most High will bestow him with that which He bestows upon those of great faith and the martyrs.' " This has been mentioned in the abridgement of *Ihya' 'ulum al-din*.'¹⁰

A PRAYER TO STAVE OFF HYPOCRISY

(RAK'ATAYN FI AL-SIRR LI-DAF' AL-NIFAQ)

MY FATHER (may Allah Most High have mercy upon him) said, 'One means of staving off hypocrisy is to offer a two-rak'ah prayer in complete secrecy.'⁶⁵⁶ *Nih. Mur.*,

NOTES

¹Similarly in Ibn Majah and al-Tirmidhi: 'The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "Whoever prays twelve rak'ahs for the midmorning prayer, for him shall Allah Most High build a palace of gold in Paradise."'

²'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi's father, Isma'il al-Nabulsi, was a prominent Hanafi scholar of the Levant of his day. Much of 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi's commentary in *Nihayat al-murad* is based upon opinions and transmissions of Islamic law and practice he learnt from his own father (may Allah have mercy upon them both). Thus, in this translation, any quotes beginning with 'My father said' are the words of Isma'il al-Nabulsi.

³Narrated by Malik, Imam Ahmad, al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Khuzaymah, al-Bayhaqi, and Ibn Hibban, all of whose chains of transmission return to Abu Hurayrah.

⁴Narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, 'Abd al-Razzaq, al-Darimi, and Ibn Hibban.

⁵As related on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) by 'Abd al-Razzaq in his *Musannaf* and al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-iman*, with a chain ending with the Companion (*mar'uf*); al-Daylami relates it from Abu Umamah with a chain of transmission returning to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). See Salim al-Sanhuri, *Risalat al-kashf wa al-bayan 'an fada'il laylat al-nisf min Sha'ban*.

⁶al-Mundhiri, *al-Tarhib wa al-tarhib*, 2/65, citing Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahani.

⁷In Ibn al-A'rabi: 'Whoever rises for worship on the eve of the Eid, and the eve of mid-Sha'ban, his heart will not die on the day that hearts die' (*Mu'jam Ibn al-A'rabi*, 3/1047: 2252).

⁸Narrated by al-Tirmidhi.

⁹Narrated by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah.

¹⁰For this prayer and the supporting hadith, see Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'ulum al-din*, Book IV, Chapter VII, Section II ('ma yatakarrar bi-takarrur al-asabi'). The hadith scholar Zayn al-Din al-'Iraqi (d. 806/1404) comments regarding this hadith: '[It is

related by] Abu Musa al-Madini and Abu Mansur al-Daylami in *Musnad al-firdaws* with a very weak chain of transmitters, and is *munkar* [meaning, the status of the hadith is either unknown or severely criticized] (*al-Mughni 'an haml al-asfar fi al-asfar fi takhrij ahadith al-Ihya' min al-akhbar*, 1/201).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

'Ashūrā': The tenth of Muharram; lit. 'the tenth day'. The prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) recommended fasting on this day in remembrance of, and in gratitude for, the deliverance of Moses and the Israelites from Pharaoh.

'Aṣr: See *midafternoon prayer*.

Ayyām al-tashrīq: The 11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhu al-Hijjah; lit. 'the days of curing the meat', i.e. of the animals slaughtered on the previous day, the tenth of Dhu al-Hijjah (*yawm al-naḥr*); or, alternatively, 'the days following the Eid prayer, which is performed when the sun has risen (*sharaqat*)'.

Closing salutation (*taslīmah*): The act of saying '*as-salāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatu 'llāh*' ('may the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you') after the final sitting, in order to end the ritual prayer. According to the Hanafi school, one recites the salutation once while turning one's head to the right, and a second time while turning one's head to the left.

Communal sunnah (*sunnah kifāyah*): An act which is sunnah and is deemed fulfilled if performed by some members of a given locale (compare *personal sunnah*).

Confirmed sunnah (*sunnah mu'akkadah*): An action regularly performed by the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) which he diligently performed and did not generally neglect, but did not make obligatory. Neglecting a confirmed sunnah is blameworthy but not sinful, unless one's neglect of the act becomes habitual.

Dawn prayer (*fajr*): A daily obligatory ritual prayer which begins at dawn and ends at sunrise.

Day of 'Arafah: See *yawm 'Arafah*.

Direction of prayer (*qiblah*): The direction towards the Kaaba in Mecca which a person faces when performing the ritual prayer.

Du'ā': See *supplication*.

Ḍuḥā: See *midmorning prayer*.

Fajr: See *dawn prayer*.

Fard: See *obligatory*.

Formula of refuge: To recite: 'a'ūdhu bi-'Llāhi mina 'sh-shayṭāni 'r-rajīm' ('I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Devil').

Greatest Imam: An honorific used for the eponym of the Hanafi school of law (*madhhab*), Abu Hanifah al-Nu'man b. Thabit (d. 150/767).

Hadith: A narrative record of the sayings or customs attributed to the prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) and his Companions.

Ḥamd: See *praise*.

Ḥiya' al-layl: See *night vigil*.

'Ishā': See *nightfall prayer*.

Khusūf: Lunar eclipse.

Kusūf: Solar eclipse.

Madhhab: A school of law; legal doctrine of a school of law; rite and practice according to the scholarship of a particular school of law. In Sunni Islam, there are four such schools of law today: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali.

Maghrib: See *sunset prayer*.

Majlis: See *session*.

Make-up prayer (*qaḍā'*): A ritual prayer which one has failed to perform during its appointed time, and which must mandatorily be made up thereafter.

Mandūb: See *recommended act*.

Midafternoon prayer (*'aṣr*): A daily obligatory ritual prayer which begins at the end of the noon prayer's time, and ends at sunset.

Midmorning prayer (*ḍuḥā*): A supererogatory prayer performed after the sun is well up until just before the noon prayer (*ẓuhr*).

Mubāḥ: See *permissible act*.

Mustaḥabb: See *recommended act*.

Nafl: See *supererogatory prayer*.

Necessary, or required (*wājib*): A firm command supported by a scriptural text that allows for the possibility of interpretation. Denying something necessary is corruption (*fisq*), not disbelief. Performing a necessary act is rewarded, and non-performance is sinful. (Compare *obligatory*.)

Night vigil (*ḥiya' al-layl*, or *qiyām al-layl*): Keeping awake during the night in order to perform supererogatory prayers, after the nightfall prayer (*'ishā'*) and before the dawn prayer

(*fajr*). If one sleeps, and then awakens to rise and pray, the prayer is called '*tahajjud*'.

Nightfall prayer ('ishā'): A daily obligatory ritual prayer which begins upon total nightfall, and ends at true dawn.

Noon prayer (zuhr): A daily obligatory ritual prayer which begins after the sun's zenith for that day, and ends when an object's shadow, minus the length of its shadow at the time of the sun's zenith, equals twice the object's height, according to the dominant position of the Hanafi school of law (the Shafi'i and other schools, as well as a second opinion of the Hanafi school, hold that it ends when an object's shadow, minus the length of its shadow at the time of the sun's zenith, equals the object's height).

Obligatory (farḍ): A firm command established by a scriptural text whose transmission is decisively established, and whose meaning is decisive, such that it is not open to the possibility of interpretation. One is bound to believe in and act upon the obligatory. The one who denies it could well fall into disbelief. Performing an obligatory act is rewarded, and non-performance is sinful. (Compare *necessary*, or *required* (*wajib*).)

Permissible act (mubāḥ): An act for which one is intrinsically neither rewarded nor punished for performing or not performing. Most acts and habits of one's daily worldly life fall into this category. If, however, one couples an intention of pleasing Allah with the performance of such an act, the intention changes this act from mere habit to an act of worship. Likewise, if performing a permissible act at a particular moment would lead to something disliked or forbidden by the Sacred Law, the act at that moment is deemed disliked or forbidden, respectively.

Personal sunnah (sunnat 'ayn): An act which is sunnah for individuals to perform, and is not deemed fulfilled in respect

to a given individual if performed by others in his locale (compare *communal sunnah*).

Praise (ḥamd): Expressing gratitude to Allah for the blessings He bestows. As an act of remembrance of Allah, it is to say '*al-ḥamdu li-'Llāh*' ('All praise is to Allah alone').

Qaḍā': See *make-up prayer*.

Qiblah: See *direction of prayer*.

Qiyām al-layl: See *night vigil*.

Rak'ah: A single cycle of a ritual prayer, in which one stands to recite a portion of the Koran, bows, and prostrates.

Ramadan night prayers (tarāwīḥ): A confirmed sunnah prayer performed during Ramadan. The prayer is a total of twenty rak'ahs, performed in sets of four rak'ahs in which every two rak'ahs ends with closing salutation (*tastīmāh*). In between every set of four rak'ahs, a small rest (*tarwīḥah*) is had. According to the Hanafi school of law, an individual may validly perform the Ramadan night prayers alone without being part of a congregation, while performing them as part of a congregation is recommended (*mustahabb*). However, it is a communal sunnah (*sunnah kifayah*) upon the Muslims of any given locale to ensure that the prayer is performed in congregation.

Recommended act (mustahabb, or mandūb): An act which the Sacred Law deems praiseworthy, and which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) did at times or which was of his worldly habits. Performing a recommended act is rewarded, but leaving it is not sinful or blameworthy.

Required: See *necessary*.

Rite: A practice or act legislated by the Sacred Law; a practice

or act according to the scholarship of a particular school of law (see *madhhab*).

Ritual prayer (*ṣalāh*): A prayer to Allah with specified actions, beginning with the *takbir* and ending with the closing salutations (*taslimah*). The majority of prayers mentioned in this book—as well as the five daily prayers which all Muslims perform—are such ritual prayers.

Ṣalāh: See *ritual prayer*.

Session (*majlis*): In Arabic, the original term '*majlis*' is, literally, a 'sitting', or, lexically, a 'gathering'. In the nomenclature of Islamic law (*fiqh*), it is a single instance, or *session*, of an activity's occurrence which is continuous (i.e. not interrupted by a separate sort of activity), regardless of whether the activity takes place in one physical location or more than one. Thus, for example, if one sits on a chair in a room to read a book, is interrupted by a phone call, and then resumes reading the book after ending the phone call, this is considered two separate sessions (*majlis*) of reading, even though he never moved from the chair. On the other hand, if one begins reading while standing in front of one's home, and then walks to a friend's home, reading the whole time, this is considered one single session (*majlis*) of reading, even though he began and ended the act of reading in two different locations.

Sunnah: Any action which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is reported to have said, done, or permitted to be done; a normative action or way.

Sunnah mu'akkadah: See *confirmed sunnah*.

Sunnat 'ayn: See *personal sunnah*.

Sunset prayer (*maghrib*): A daily obligatory ritual prayer which begins at sunset, and ends upon total nightfall.

Supererogatory worship (*nafl*): A non-obligatory act of worship performed voluntarily as a means of drawing closer to Allah. The distinction between supererogatory (*nafl*) and recommended (*mandūb*) is one of genus and type: a '*nafl*' act of worship is any act of worship which is not obligatory or requisite to perform; thus, the term '*nafl*' includes both 'confirmed sunnah' (*sunnah mu'akkadah*) and 'recommended' (*mandūb*, or *mustahabb*) acts of worship.

Supplication (*du'ā'*): A non-ritual prayer and plea made to Allah to ask Him for that which is good for one. Supplications may be performed at certain junctures of the ritual prayer (*ṣalāh*) and at nearly any time outside of the ritual prayer. While ritual prayers must be performed and recited in accordance with the Prophetic teachings, supplications can be recited in Arabic or any other language, and the wording may be from the Koran, the Prophetic traditions, from spiritual masters, or straight from one's own heart.

Tā'awwudh: See *formula of refuge*.

Tahajjud: A type of night vigil prayer, in which one arises to pray after having spent part of the night asleep. So named because one must 'exert' oneself (Ar. 'ha-ja-da') in order to shake off slumber and rise to worship.

Takbir: The extolling of Allah, by saying '*Allāhu akbar*' ('God is Most Great').

Tarāwīḥ: See *tarwīḥah* and *Ramadan night prayers*.

Tarwīḥah (pl. *tarāwīḥ*): Lit. 'a short rest'. In the Sacred Law, the term refers to the rest had in-between sets of night prayers performed in Ramadan. By extension, the term has come to include the set of four rak'ahs performed previous to the rest, along with the short rest itself (see *Ramadan night prayers*).

Taslimah: See *closing salutation*.

Two Companions: Abu Hanifah's two most famous students, Abu Yusuf (d. 182/798) and Muhammad al-Shaybani (d. 189/805), who were great jurists and scholars in their own right. While the school of law is named after their teacher Abu Hanifah, many of the legal opinions that form the corpus of the school's legal doctrines return to one or both of them.

Wājib: See *necessary, or required*.

Witr: A required (*wājib*) prayer according to the Hanafi school of law. It is a three-rak'ah prayer, with a special supplication (*qunūt*) read while standing at the end of the third rak'ah. It may only be performed after the nightfall prayer (*'ishā'*). It is recommended to be the last prayer of one's night, though extra supererogatory night prayers may validly be performed after it.

Yawm al-ad'hā: A synonymous term for *yawm al-naḥr*.

Yawm 'Arafah: The ninth of Dhu al-Hijjah; lit. 'The day of 'Arafah', so named because it is the day that the pilgrims stand on Mount 'Arafah as the central rite of the hajj.

Yawm al-fiṭr: The first of Shawwal; lit. 'the day of breaking the fast', so named because it is the day after the end of Ramadan and the month-long fast.

Yawm al-naḥr: The tenth of Dhu al-Hijjah; lit. 'the day of sacrificial slaughter', so named because it is the day that a sheep, cow, or camel is sacrificially slaughtered, and the meat then distributed, in remembrance of, and in gratitude for, the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham. This day thus marks the beginning of Eid al-Adha.

Yawm al-tarwīyah: The eighth of Dhu al-Hijjah; lit. 'the day

of watering', so named because on this day the pilgrims are to water their animals and drink well in preparation for the strenuous travel and worship of the following days.

Zuhr: See *noon prayer*.

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